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Claims 1, 4-12, and 15-22 are pending in the present application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4, 5, 12, 15, and 16 have been amended and claims 3 and 14 have been canceled. No new claims have been added.

A. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-5, 12, and 14-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,199,916, issued to Klinger et al ("the '916 patent"). Claims 3 and 14 have been canceled thereby obviating their rejections. As explained in the following remarks, the above-amendments to independent claims 1 and 12 are believed to overcome the remaining rejections. The amendments made to claims 1 and 12 are fully supported in FIGS. 12-17 of the originally-filed drawings and pages 9 and 10 of the originally-filed specification. No new matter has been added.

The '916 patent is directed to a spin welded fluid connector and includes independent claims 1 and 7. Claim 1 is directed to a fluid connector for spin welding with a tube having a generally planar end surface and claim 7 is directed to a fluid coupling including a connector body and a tube.

Currently amended claim 1 of the present invention is directed to a method of forming a gas impermeable joint in a fuel fill system and includes the steps of spin welding a tube having a metallic layer disposed between inner and outer plastic layers to a plastic surface of a funnel portion of the fuel fill system to form the joint. The funnel portion includes an outer protrusion portion, which contacts a shoulder portion of the outer plastic layer to prevent the tube from extending within the component substantially beyond the depth of the weld and to aid in the alignment of the tube and funnel.

Currently amended claim 12 is directed to a fuel fill system that includes a tube having a metallic layer disposed between inner and outer plastic layers, the outer plastic layer including a shoulder protruding radially outward around at least a portion of its circumference, and a funnel portion including an outer protrusion portion surrounding a cylindrical recess. The tube and funnel are in fluid communication via a joint.

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The '916 patent does not teach or suggest either a method of forming that includes causing the shoulder portion of the outer layer of a tube to contact an outer protrusion portion of a funnel or a fuel fill system including such a tube having an outer layer with a shoulder and funnel with an outer protrusion portion joined by a spin welded joint. In addition, as one skilled in the art will appreciate, it would not be obvious to include a tube having a shoulder and a funnel having an outer protrusion portion. Accordingly, the Applicants submit that the '916 patent fails to either anticipate or render obvious currently amended claims 1 and 12. As follows, for at least the same reasons claims that the '916 patent fails to anticipate or render claims 1 and 12 obvious, the '916 patent also fails to either anticipate or render obvious claims 4-11 and 15-22.

B. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 6-9, 11, 17-20, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over the '916 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,524,673, issued to Noone, and claims 10 and 21 as obvious over the '916 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,074,717, issued to Little. Because claims 6-11 and 17-22 depend from either claim 1 or claim 12, both of which are believed to patentable over all the art cited, either alone or in combination, for at least the same reasons, they are also believed to be patentable. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the obviousness rejections of claims 6-11 and 17-22.

C. Summary

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of this application are now in a condition for allowance and favorable action thereon is requested.

The amendments made to the claims place the claims in better form for appeal. In addition, no additional searching is believed to be required to examine the amended claims. Accordingly, consideration of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions or believes that a discussion with Applicant's attorney would expedite prosecution, the Examiner is invited and encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

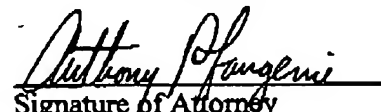
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This response is being filed within two (2) months of the mailing date of the Final Office Action. In addition, no fees are believed to be due. However, please apply any credits or charge any deficiencies to our Deposit Account No. 23-1665.

Respectfully submitted,
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Reg. No. 42,565


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